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Hints on the Care of Dahlias and Gladioli

While it is hard to give set rules on the culture of Dahlias on account of the difference in seasons and soil, yet if the following rules are carried out you will usually meet with good success. When you receive your bulbs look each one over carefully and if they are not all right send them back to me at once with the label attached, if satisfactory place them in the cellar and cover with sand until time to plant. Do not plant until the first of June, but get your ground ready by the tenth of May. First be sure that your ground is not sour. Test with litmus paper, which you can get at any drug store. Take a piece of the paper and bury where the ground is damp; if the paper remains blue it is not sour, but if it turns brick color it is sour and needs lime. One peck to twenty-five square feet, put on top after plowing. Burnt oyster shells are as good as anything, only use four times as many, that is, before they are burnt. First put a light dressing of coarse manure on top and plow under, cow manure is the best, but that from the horse stable will do, then plow or spade very deep, pulverize the soil thoroughly. When you are ready to plant, dig the hills seven inches deep, three by four feet apart. After the hills are dug put one pint of sheep or cow manure in each hill and mix thoroughly with the soil. If you do not use coarse manure, put one quart in each hill. Ground bone is the next best. Lay the bulb on its side with the sprout up (never stand the bulb up). If it is very dry at the time of planting put two quarts of water in each hill and let it settle before placing the bulb in it, then cover with three or four inches of soil and press it down to keep from drying out. When the plant is four or five inches high fill in until the ground is level. Keep the soil well cultivated until buds begin to appear, then do not go deep or close to the plants. If your plants grow tall drive a stake ten inches from the plant and slant towards it, tie with a soft twine or piece of cloth. If you wish large flowers keep one-third of the foliage cut off, and two-thirds of the buds. Keep all dead blossoms picked off. Flowers should be picked early in the morning or late in the day. And if to be handled much the stems should be placed in cool water in the cellar ten hours beforehand; never leave any foliage on the cut flowers as it makes them wilt. When frost kills the foliage cut the stalks off close to the ground and lift with a spading fork. If the clumps are large, allow to dry one day, if small not so long; this depends on the size of your bulbs and the weather. Then place in the cellar where they will not freeze. If you have a heater in the cellar or your clumps are small it is a good plan to cover with dry sand. In the spring take the clump and split down through the crown, then cut out a bulb wherever you can get it with a sprout on; one sprout to a bulb is much better than more and a small bulb just as good as a large one.

Don't let your bulbs dry up before planting.

Don't plant too early or too shoal.

Don't neglect cultivation.

Don't fertilize too heavily; that does not mean but what you should use some.

It all depends on the condition of your soil. Keep the flowers picked. If at any time there is anything you do not understand about Dahlia Culture, write me and I will give you all the information within my power.

GLADIOLI

Gladioli will do well on any ordinary soil, with a fair amount of fertilizer or coarse manure, not too close to the bulbs.

Plant bulbs 5 or 6 inches apart and about 5 inches deep. Half covering them at time of planting, and then filling in around them when the sprouts are 6 inches high.

Wishing you success with your Dahlias and Gladioli, I remain,

D. V. HOWELL, Dahlia Specialist
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